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The Nominal Sentence in Semitic

by

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THE NOMINAL SENTENCE IN SEMITIC

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What are known as "verbs" are a feature of morphology, derivable either directly or indirectly from what have been termed "nominal" sentences. This thesis, previously supported by data from the history of Egyptian, is seen to be further illustrated in the development of Semitic.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The nominal sentence has played a considerable role in descriptive and historical studies not only in Semitic and other branches of Lisramic (for term see Hodge 1972), but also elsewhere (e.g. Benveniste 1971:131-144). Recent interest in Semitic has included not only Andersen's very enlightening work on Hebrew (1970) but also studies such as those on the verbal noun used instead of the expected inflected form of the verb in northwest Semitic (cf. usages noted in Dahood 1966-70, grammar and indices *sub voce*). In Egyptian Polotsky has made major advances in relating nominal and verbal forms (1971), Groll has studied the *Non-Verbal Sentences in Late Egyptian* (1967) and Schenkel has suggested new approaches (1970 and earlier articles). · Gilula has summarized much of the present thought in a review (1970) on Egyptian negatives.

In Cushitic there is an important historical study, deriving verbs from nominal constructions (Plazikowsky-Brauner 1965). For Chadic special mention should be made of Lukas's discussion of verbs and nominal components (1969). There is also a brief comparative study on several Hausa constructions belonging to the genre (Hodge 1969).[1]

2. THE PROBLEM

The problem of relating nominal and verbal sentences is reflected in some of the terminology which has been employed. In Egyptian, for example, there is the Pseudopartizip (= Old Perfective, Gardiner 1957:234), the pseudo-verbal construction (Gardiner 1957:243), as well as the proposed Semiverb, Semiimperativ and Seminoun (Schenkel 1970). These are symptoms of the noun vs. verb argument which has plagued linguistic scholars for centuries.

In 1952 Robins made a plea that linguists come up with an empirically based distinction between noun and verb. He recognized that a resolution of the problem could be sought in semantics but felt that this was not the real answer. Seeing also the pitfalls of theory for its own sake he pled for a data-based solution (297; see also 1970:25). The present article will not resolve the basic dilemma nor give proper answer to Robins' plea. It should, however, help to clarify the situation as regards the relationship of nominals and verbals to what may be termed the basic proposition.

From a semantic approach Chafe has argued that "every sentence which is of interest to us is built around a PREDICATIVE element... I shall refer to predicative elements as VERBS" (1970: 96). This begs the question. I shall here assume the first part--a predicative element, but not the second. Two types of predication appear to be basic: one which posits identification and one which posits existence. These will be seen to be operative in the examples below. It is hoped to demonstrate that there is no need for a verb to express either.

3. THE PRESENT THESIS

Basic semantic elements, such as the proposition-making "is identified as" and "exixts," will here be called "motifs." Viewed historically, both of these motifs are shown to be representable by non-verbal items, forming what are known as "nominal sentences." What are known as "verbs" then appear to be derivable, either directly or indirectly, from such nominal sentences--at least as far as the basic proposition itself is concerned.

The situation is complicated by the occasional use of "verb" forms (i.e., inflected forms following verbal patterns established in a given language) to express a semantic motif essential to a proposition (e.g., the use of the verb *wn* 'be' rather than the particle *'w* in Egyptian to express existence, the use of 'be' as an auxiliary in Amharic, Neo-Aramaic, etc.). Such usage does not invalidate the thesis, which only holds that any proposition may be expressed non-verbally, and that all verb forms are ultimately derivative from non-verbals.

In earlier thinking along these lines I used Egyptian as the main example to substantiate this claim.[2] Having the longest known history, it shows most clearly how language changes by using

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[1] These references are illustrative, as elsewhere in this article. Exhaustive treatment would require a monograph.

[2] For example, in the paper "Some Implications of the Linguistic Cycle Hypothesis," presented at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference in 1971, to appear, in Rumanian, in *Studii și cercetări lingvistica* (partially published as Hodge 1974).

more analytic forms to replace synthetic ones, the more analytic then freezing into synthetic, etc. (Korostovcev 1969, Hodge 1970a, 1970b; see also Tesnière 1939). The question of the direction of linguistic change is at least in this respect settled (cf. McQuown 1956). It is not so much a direction *per se* as much as it is the continuous operation of the "syntactic constant" (the semantic reassignment factor; cf. Hodge 1970b) along with the sloughing off of the frozen synthetic or morphological forms. We here examine some examples of the operation of this process relative to the nominal sentence and the basic linguistic proposition.

A few illustrations from Egyptian will serve as background to the discussion of Semitic. In Coptic the "verb" forms are often traceable to earlier nominal sentences. E.g. *efsōtəm* 'he hears' is from *'wf ḥr sg̃m* 'he is [non-verbal *'w*] upon hearing' (Till 1961:154), *efesōtəm* 'he will hear' (Future III) from *'wf r sg̃m* 'he is toward hearing' (157). Both constructions go back to Old Egyptian (Edel 1964:472, 474). The basic proposition need have nothing verbal in it: *'wf [']r xmntnwčn* 'he will be your third' ('he is [non-verbal *'w*] toward [*'r*] your third' [391]), *'nk 'r pt* 'I am [on my way] to heaven' (465).

As is well-known, of "verb" forms Egyptian shares only the imperative and the Old Perfective (= Sem. perfect, permansive) with Semitic. The former is replaced within Egyptian history by a nominal form (an infinitive), and the latter is universally admitted to be of nominal origin. The distinctively Egyptian conjugations (*sg̃mf*, etc.) are also believed to be of nominal origin (e.g., Gardiner 1957:326), and their nominal function within the sentence is becoming more and more transparent (cf. various articles Polotsky 1971). We have a clear picture of verbs deriving from nominal sentences and being replaced by them (cf. Gardiner 1957:382). Whether at any given time one may point to a form (either productive or vestigial) and say, "that is a verb," is not to the point. As we now understand the situation, all Old Egyptian verb forms are of nominal origin (*contra* Cohen 1955:281 and references). Within the history of the language only nominal sentences maintain their essential form. Verbal sentences are replaced by periphrases, often clearly nominal. Egyptian has, as a matter of fact, been characterized as a "nominal" language (Gardiner 1937). The essential truth of this, and the implications thereof, are only now being fully realized and exploited.

4. THE SITUATION IN SEMITIC

4.1. Egypto-Semitic Parallelism

Despite the difficulties inherent in the vowelless Egyptian materials, there are striking parallelisms with Semitic. In addition to the common nominal sentences (noun = noun; noun plus adverb), there are even such constructions as infinitive plus independent pronoun (Gardiner 1957:225), very much like the Northwest Semitic examples, as has been pointed out by Moran (1950:171).[3] Thacker has also called our attention to Egypto-Semitic parallels relevant to the nominal sentence:

> Thus the Egyptian constructions with *ḥr* plus the infinitive, expressing pro-
> longed, continuous, or repeated action, and plus the old perfective, expressing
> state or passivity, together known to grammarians of Egyptian as the pseudo-
> verbal construction, have their counterparts in the Semitic constructions with
> the active participle and with the passive participle. (1963:171)

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[3]Although the order is different (with the pronoun first), it may be relevant to note that in this connection the possessive use of the Egyptian independent pronouns (Gardiner 1957: 89). Syriac has an independent pronoun plus infinitive construciton (Moran 1950:171), con-curring with the Egyptian order. This would argue for a different interpretation--such as 'hearing [is] to me' *aut sim.*--than that proposed for Semitic by Moran: 'I am [engaged] in killing' (172). Cf. the endingless *ṣabāt* from Amarna (170).

4.2. Semitic Examples

One is constrained to note, however, that Semitic does not offer us as clearcut a picture of
cyclic development as does Egyptian. We do not, of course, have any Semitic language with
a comparable history in terms of length. The best attested ancient language, Akkadian, has
a much shorter history (ca. 2500 years). The longest attested living Semitic language would
appear to be Arabic, though this may be a matter of definition. (Is any modern Aramaic
language a direct enough descendant of an older one which is earlier attested than Arabic?) .

Despite the broken nature of our history we have sufficient evidence to show that similar
changes have taken place and that similar tendencies are at work in Semitic as have been
observed in Egyptian. Semitists have, with much justification, looked more upon the histor-
ical continuities which they have found than upon the innovations. A welcome exception,
Friedrich, in an article which deals very specifically with the same aspect of change with
which we are here concerned, writes of modern Syriac as a "type of degenerate Semitic language"
(1962 tr.). The article begins, however, with a paragraph on the remarkable conservatism
of Arabic (95). Even granted present scepticism regarding the antiquity of much Arabic mor-
phology, his point is in general justified. One need only examine the use of a form which
has demonstrated staying power longer than any other verb form known: the prefix conjugation.
Found in Old Akkadian, it is fully alive in Arabic today. By saying "the prefix conjugation"
the question is begged as to the relationship among the several forms which exist and which
have existed. There is, however, general agreement that the proto-language had at least one
prefix conjugation (cf. von Soden 1957:207, 1959; Hetzron 1969). By proto-language is meant
not just proto-Semitic but some older stages in the dispersal of the Lisramic languages. As
Egyptian has no trace, not even a vestigial one (*contra* Cohen 1955:281), of a prefix conjuga-
tion, it is better to consider proto-Lisramic itself as not yet having formed such. After
Egyptian had split off from the parent stock, the prefix conjugation came into being and is
duly reflected in other branches of the family.[4] It is not irrelevant to point out that the
origins proposed for the prefix form(s) assume it (them) to have come from a pronominal plus a
nominal (cf. Diakonoff 1965:41 and, with at least one eyebrow raied, Thierry 1951).[5]

For our purposes we need to show that this form, like any other verb form, is in the course of
time to be replaced with nominal constructions. Good examples of such replacement are found--
as part of a general shift in verb forms--in several of the modern Aramaic languages, such as
the Neo-Aramaic of Azerbaijan (Soviet: Friedrich 1959; Urmia: Bergsträsser 1928:91; Jewish:
Garbell 1965; bibliographic survey: Tsereteli 1965:xiv-xix), that of Tur Abdin (Siegel 1968
[1923]) and Mandaic (Macuch 1965). As has frequently been pointed out, many of the changes
found in the modern languages were foreshadowed in older Aramaic. Classical Syriac, for
instance, has inflected verbs from participial constructions used alongside the older forms
(Bergsträsser 1928:66, 91). For example, the participle plus a personal pronoun may be used
as an imperfect: *gāneβ* 'he steals', *ganbā* 'she steals'.

Statements about and examples from Neo-Aramaic are:

Urmia: "Von den Formes des alten Verbum finitum ist nur der Imper. noch vorhanden: die
übrigen Tempora sind durch Neubildungen ersetzt" (Bergsträsser 1928.91) The verb morphology
of Jewish Neo-Aramaic of Azerbaijan, including that of Urmia, is treated in Garbell (1965:62-
76). Hers is a far more detailed analysis, and we have taken our examples of this general
area from her. The clearly nominal character of the new durative stem is shown by the follow-
ing: *garōšlen* 'I (m.) am pulling', *sušéle* 'it (m.) is a horse' (64). She analyzes *le* as a
"copula." Another "tense": *garšen* 'I (m.) (shall) pull', *gariš* 'he (will) pull' (65).

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[4] I am not ready to state that all other branches have prefix conjugations dating from this
period.

[5] Along these lines the nominal uses of the prefix forms in Semitic should be studied. See,
for example, such a construction as Ps. 75.8 *zeh yašpil wəzeh yārim* 'the one who brings
down and the one who raises up' (Dahood 1970:267).

Tur Abdin: "Mit Ausnahme des Imperativs...und des enklitischen Hilfzeitwortes--vo...haben die Bestandteile, aus denen sich im J[ung] A[ramäischen] das Verbum zusammensetzt, alle nominale Ursprung" (Siegel 1968 [1923]:144). Examples: *qoṭil* 'he kills' (active participle), *ṯwiṛ* 'he was broken' (passive participle), *msikla* 'she began' (passive participle plus *l* 'to' plus pronoun).

Mandaic: "The mod[ern] perfect follows the cl[assical] patterns...The cl[assical] imperfect died out, being replaced by the special Neo-Aramaic present, consisting of the particle... *qə, qa, qo*, followed by the act[ive] participle with the enclitic personal pronoun" (Macuch 1965:256). Examples: *an qagāṭelna* 'I'm killing' (263, 280), *qahāderna* 'I'm turning around' (280), *qamšāderna* 'I'm sending' (participle in *m*-), *qombārexna* 'I'm blessing' (281).

The Semitist has been well aware of these developments. Nominal sentences occur in all periods, have had considerable, though as yet insufficient, attention, and the gradual replacement of verbal sentences by nominal ones is observable over the centuries. One may note as a familiar example Bauer-Leander's analysis of Dan. 7.2-15 (1927:297-99) with its statements regarding the use of verb forms and nominal sentences, along with the relevant discussions of participial usages and nominal sentences in the same volume. There are the well-known changes between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew, where a rather complex usage of prefix and suffix forms has been regularized to a participial formation (i.e., a nominal sentence) used in a durative sense (with auxiliaries for various nuances)--largely replacing the old prefix forms, the perfect for (past or putative) completed action, and an imperfect (prefix form) for future or hypothetical action (Segal 1958 [1927]:151-65).

5. CONCLUSION

The present writer sees these replacements as in line with language change everywhere--and therefore of vital importance to linguistic theory. We have as yet no timetable for the occurrence of such change and see it happening in various languages at widely different times. We cannot say why Arabic still uses the prefix imperfect while the above Neo-Aramaic does not. Language contacts may spur certain changes, but since the developments we are dealing with here are a general phenomenon, theories of other language influence in this area must be handled with great care. It is interesting to note that Friedrich gave rather blanket credit to Iranian influence for the new constructions in his 1959 article, whereas in 1962 he was much more cautious, saying that not all such changes could be due to such contact. Kutscher (1969) has made a very good case for the Persian origin of the Syriac construction *šmīᶜ li* 'I heard' ('heard to me'). However, this very formation has been advanced as a possible origin of Old Egyptian *sǧmnf* 'he heard' (interpreted as 'heard [sǧm] to [n] him [f]') by, among others, Vycichl (1959). If such a derivation is valid, the structure is proto-Lisramic--or at least pre-Egyptian. This is not to say that Persian had no influence in this instance but that its influence may have been of a different kind--reinforcing a possible native formation rather than introducing an entirely new one.

Returning to the main thesis, the aspect of these developments which is of greatest importance to general linguistics is the nature of the replacements. If we have Latin *vidēbit* replaced by Late Latin *il(le) vider(e) (h)abe(t)*, becoming French *il verra*, we have in each instance what we may identify as a "verb." In the Semitic and Egyptian examples this is frequently not the case. The general pattern of replacements is nominal. The nominal sentence is seen to be not only the historical basis for all verb types but the normal replacement for "worn out" verbs. If we are to speak in terms of universal linguistic primes, we may retain proposition-making motifs for identification and existence but we are totally unjustified in identifying either as verbal.

Our conclusion is hardly new. There has been support for the priority of the noun over the verb in glottogonic speculation for years. It has, however, been largely drawn from reconstructed forms--areas, in short, where proof was not attainable. The evidence here is mainly from actual language history.

Much remains to be done. Recent work indicates that the use of verb forms, once created, needs to be studied both descriptively and historically in order properly to understand their syntactic role (see, e.g., the work of Polotsky on Egyptian and Coptic:1971).

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    Ursprung der periphrastischen Konjugation sğm-n-f als Parallele zu aramäisch šemiᶜ
    leh 'er hat gehört'," *ZDMG* 109.253.57.

THE SEMITIC VERBAL TENSE SYSTEM

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This paper presents a survey of the results obtained in several papers and monographs written by the author concerning the verbal systems of Semitic and Old Egyptian. He found that the Semitic tenses also existed in Old Egyptian and that Old Egyptian material may be used to reconstruct the tense-system of Proto-Semitic. The tenses preserved their original functions in West Semitic and Old Egyptian, whereas the use of tenses in Akkadian was a deviation from the original pattern.

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0. INTRODUCTION

This paper gives a survey of the results obtained in several papers and monographs I wrote concerning the verbal system in Semitic and Old Egyptian. In fact, I found that the Semitic tenses also existed in O.Eg., and that O.Eg. material can be used to reconstruct the tense-system in Proto-Semitic. Then, my conclusion was that the tenses had preserved their original functions in W. Sem. and in O.Eg., whereas the use of the tenses in Akkadian was a deviation from the original use.

This theory is a new one. I do not discuss here the current theories, which are much more complicated than mine.

In this paper I do not quote examples, because I do not want to repeat here what I wrote elsewhere.

At the end of this paper I refer to my own contributions to the problem, and I quote a few references where a status questionis of the current theories can be found.

1. THE PREFIX-CONJUGATION IN WEST-SEMITIC

In Arabic the prefix-conjugation has two tenses: an imperfect (abbreviation impf.) ending in -u (*yaqtulu*), as opposed to the preterite (prt.) without that ending (*yaqtul*, used after *lam* 'not', *lammā* 'not (yet)' and *ʔin* 'if'). The prt. form is also used as a jussive (juss.) (*yaqtul*, after *li-*).

The impf., prt. and juss. appear to occur also in Hebrew: impf. *yiqtol* 'he kills', prt. *wayyiqtol* 'and then he killed', juss. *yiqtol* 'may he kill'. The three forms differ in certain weak verb classes, e.g. 2-w: impf. *yāqûm*, prt. *wayyāqom* (pause *wayyāqôm*), juss. *yāqom* (pause *yāqôm*). The difference in vocalization of those forms indicates that in an older period the impf. was ending in -*u, whereas the prt. and juss. were characterized by the absence of that vowel.

Also Ugaritic had the opposition impf. -*u/prt., juss. -*-. At least, this can be deduced from the attested forms with certain weak verb-classes (those ending in -' and in -y). Strong verbs have *yqtl* for the three tenses, but we may suppose that here too the opposition -*u/-*- did exist.

So we may conclude that in an early stage W. Sem. had an impf. in -*u, a prt.-juss. in -*-.

2. THE PREFIX-CONJUGATION IN AKKADIAN

In my paper 'The Present-Imperfect in Semitic', *BiOr* XXIX, 1972, p. 3-7, I prove that Akk. *iparras*, usually called present, has the same functions as Hebrew imperfect *qiqtol*. I enumerated the different meanings of both forms, and found out that there were 17 distinct cases in which Akk. uses a present. In the same 17 cases Hebrew uses an impf. *yiqtol*. So it is not possible to assume, as some do, that there is an opposition between an Akk. durative *iparras* and a W. Sem. punctual or narrative *yaqtulu*. This theory, defended by several Semitists, cannot be correct: Both formations have the same meaning, so their functions are identic. (Cf. Ungnad's *Grammatik des Akkadischen*, 3. Auflage 1949, p. 99, where present *iparas* is 'momentan'!).

In the same paper I defend the theory, that Akk. *iparras* and W. Sem. *yaqtulu* have the same origin: *yaqˈt.lu*. Akk. preserved the Proto-Semitic stress (in Proto-Semitic there was a

Dreisilbengesetz just as was the case in O.Eg. before the elision of the short final vowels; this means that the stress cannot go farther forward than the antepenultimate syllable). This stress caused the doubling of the second radical: *rr* in *iparras*.

The ending -*u* was dropped in Akk. According to a remark made on the first NACSL conference by R. Hetzron, -*u* was preserved in subordinated clauses: *iparrasu*. If this is true, the "subjunctive" ending -*u* was afterward extended to other tenses: subj. prt. *iprusu*, subj. stative *parsu*. (According to R. Hetzron, "subj." in Akk. is a misnomer for "subordinate").

In W. Sem. the Dreisilbengesetz disappeared, so that the stress could be placed on the syllable preceding the antepenultimate: **yáq.t.lu*. There are remnants in W. Sem. having still a vowel after the first radical, but normally this unstressed vowel is elided: *yáqt.lu*.

3. THE *sdm.f* FORMATION IN OLD EGYPTIAN REPRESENTING AN HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EARLIER *yqtl*-FORMATION

In my 'Contribution to the Verbal System in Old Egyptian', *Orientalia Gandensia* VI, 1972, I defend a new theory concerning the O.Eg. *sdm.f* formation. Whereas some maintain that *sdm.f* has a nominal origin (and hence originates from an adjective or a noun), I assume that *sdm.f* is the natural historical development of the original preformative tenses *yqtl*. Let us explain how I found this theory.

The oldest Egyptian texts have been analysed and described in Edel's *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 1955-1964. Well then, it appears that the *sdm.f* of two weak verbal classes occurs with and without a preformans *y-*, which Edel calls an "Augment": verbs consisting of only two radicals (viz. 2 inf.): *y-dd/dd*, verbs 3 inf. *y-hsy/hsy*. Up to now the Egyptologists did not pay any attention to this augment, which nevertheless is very important to our subject. I will not go into discussion now, whether this augment *y-* represents a consonant or a vowel. At least it is supposed to express something because it is written. Edel himself does not make a distinction between *y-dd* and *dd*, or between *y-hsy* and *hsy*: he calls both variants *sdm.f*. It came to our mind to examine if it is true that no difference in meaning can be found between them. This investigation is very easy, since Edel classified his material according to the meaning of the *sdm.f* formations, e.g.

§§ 468-470:   past tense of transitive verbs,

§   471:   past tense of intransitive verbs, etc.,

§§ 475-476:   a wish and an order, etc.

First we take a sheet of paper for every paragraph of Edel's *sdm.f* and indicate the field of meaning that is covered by the paragraph. Then we add for each paragraph whether the *sdm.f* of the two weak verb classes in question is *y-dd* or *dd*, *y-hsy* or *hsy*.

Next we classify the material according to the verb patterns instead of to the meaning as Edel did. In this way we obtain three groups of sheets:

1) sheets containing *dd* and *hsy*,

2) sheets containing *ydd* and *hsy*,

3) sheets containing *ydd* and *yhsy/hsy* (both variants being in the same paragraph, occur together on the same sheet).

In my *Contribution* I quoted the material completely.

It is very important that there is no sheet having d̲d̲ and yḫs̲y together, for, if s̲dm.f̲ formations with and without the augment had the same meaning, we should expect the four possible combinations.

When this new classification is finished, we notice that the meaning of the sheets no. 1 (I mean the sense indicated by Edel) is that of a preterite; the sheets no. 2 have the meaning of a jussive; the sheets no. 3 have the meaning of an imperfect. Therefore we assume that in O.Eg. the prt., the juss. and the impf. were still in existence, and had a special form with the verb classes in question.

This is not a fiction. I explained my method of working, so everybody can do it over again. It can be done in less than an hour. The same results will be found:

1. prt.:   d̲d̲ + ḫs̲y,

2. juss.:   yd̲d̲ + ḫs̲y,

3. impf.:   yd̲d̲ + yḫs̲y/ḫs̲y.

Of course I only deal with the material of Edel's Grammar. I do not claim that in later Egyptian the same distinction still exists.

Well then, when in this restricted material we find a d̲d̲ formation, it is a prt. On the other hand, y-d̲d̲ is a juss. if it occurs in the same paragraph of Edel's grammar as ḫs̲y, but it is an impf. if it is in the same paragraph as ḫs̲y/yḫs̲y.

yḫs̲y (which alternates with ḫs̲y) is an impf., but ḫs̲y (not alternating with yḫs̲y) is a prt. if it occurs in the same paragraph as d̲d̲, but it is a juss. if it occurs in the same paragraph as yd̲d̲.

Now we know that O.Eg. had still the same tenses as Semitic: prt., juss., impf. But, as distinct from the Semitic prefix-conjugation, the subject is indicated by means of a personal suffix in O.Eg.: e.g. -f̲ in s̲dm.f̲. We compare this to the evolution of Latin *amat* 'he loves' having a suffixed ending -*t* to French *il aime* having a prefixed pronoun. French *aime* does not originate in a participle or in a noun: it is the historical continuation of Latin *amat*. In the same way O.Eg. s̲dm is not a participle or a noun, but derives from patterns like Sem. *ya-qtul*, *ya-q.t.lu*. The augment *y-*, whatever its pronunciation may have been, may be the reflex of the Semitic pronominal prefix *y-*, but if this is true, it is generalized to all persons. As for the subject suffixes in O.Eg. (e.g. -f̲ in s̲dm.f̲), we assume that they were originally object suffixes: *yaqtulu-hu* 'he kills him' > 'he kills'. Then O.Eg. introduced another set of object suffixes, which are innovations.

In *Contribution* I tried to find a phonetic explanation for the variants with and without *y-*, but this is merely an hypothesis based upon the vocalization and the stress of the forms in question. I shall not repeat here what I wrote about this matter. I only want to insist on the presence of the Semitic tenses in O.Eg. It cannot be a coincidence that the three s̲dm.f̲ tenses I managed to isolate, have the same syntactic function as the tenses in Semitic.

4. WEST SEMITIC PERFECT *qatala*, OLD EGYPTIAN PSEUDO-PARTICIPLE,

AKKADIAN STATIVE *paris:* THE NOMINAL

It is a well known fact that the O.Eg. pseudo-participle (which is also called the old perfect) corresponds to the W. Sem. perfect formation. I prefer the term "nominal" for this tense (as proposed by H. Bauer-P. Leander in *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache*, § 35, i) because it is denominal: it derives from an adjective (Hebrew adj. *kabîdum* > *kābêd* 'heavy', nominal *kabîda* > *kābêd* 'he is heavy), or from a past participle *qatilum* (Hebrew *qatila* >

ʾqaṭála > qāṭál. There are remnants of *i* after the 2nd radical in Ugaritic and Hebrew.
Usually *i > a* because of a tendency towards polarity of the stem vowel: nom. *i*, u/impf. *a*;
nom. *a*/impf. *i*, *u*).

This nominal is in Akk. the stative *paris*, whose meaning is more restricted than it is in W.
Sem. and in O.Eg. Since there exists an exact correspondence between W. Sem. and O.Eg. as
to the use of the nom., I assume that the restricted use of the nom. in Akk. is a later
development. Whereas in Akk. the stative had grown to a formation that is only in indirect
relationship to the verbal system, in W. Sem. and in O. Eg. (so also in Proto-Sem.) the nom.
is the central part of the verbal system. The use of the other tenses depends upon the room
left by the nom.:

A. Nominal/Imperfect in West Semitic and Old Egyptian (and in Proto-Semitic)

Since the nom. of verba status (stative verbs, expressing a physical state (e.g. 'to be', 'to
be high', etc.) or a mental state (e.g. 'to love')) is derived from an adj., it expresses in
the first place the present: Hebrew *kābêd* 'heavy' > *kābêd* 'he is heavy'.

On the other hand, the nom. of verba actionis (active verbs), being derived from a past parti-
ciple, expresses the past: Hebrew *qāṭál* 'he is having killed' > 'he killed'. In both cases
the nom. also expresses the past: *kābêd* 'he was heavy', *qāṭál* 'he was having killed' > 'he
had killed'.

The future is expressed by means of the impf., with verba status as well as with verba actionis.

But for the present verba status use the nom. as I explained. Verba actionis on the other
hand, having a nom. with a past meaning, use the impf. for the present. So it is in the
present that verba status and verba actionis differ. This has been explained clearly by
P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique*, e.g. § 111, i:

verbum status	*hāyâ(h)*	'est'	('he is'),
verbum actionis	*yihyê(h)*	'evenit, fit'	('it happens, he becomes').

The same rule is valid in the other W. Sem. languages and in O.Eg.

> Rem. 1. Ingressive verbs (e.g. 'to become heavy') are treated like *verba actionis*.
> Verbs expressing the result of an action are treated as verba status (e.g. Arabic
> *nazala* 'he descended' > 'he dwells').

> Rem. 2. In Akk. the nom. of verba actionis is only used to indicate the result of
> an action. The original past meaning of this tense does not occur any more in Akk.

B. Nominal/Imperfect Used to Express an Aspect in West Semitic and in Old Egyptian

With verba actionis, the present and future are expressed by means of an impf. However, if one
wants to represent the action as already fulfilled, a nom. is used, as e.g. '(by these words)
I give you', or a perfectum propheticum indicating the future.

Also with verba actionis, the past is expressed by means of a nom. However, if one wants to
represent the action as durative or iterative, the impf. is used instead, e.g. 'I was writing,
I used to write'.

C. Nominal/Preterite in Semitic and Old Egyptian

The nom. *qat.la* and the prt. *yaqt.l*, having the same meaning 'he killed', were rivals. In
Akk. the nom. expressing a simple past was already replaced by the prt. in the oldest texts.

In the oldest Eg. texts the nom. could still express the past, but gradually it gave place to several prt. formations (sₔm.f, sₔm.n.f).

On the other hand, in W. Sem. the nom. prevailed over the prt.: The prt. was totally discarded in favour of the nom. in Eth. and Aram. In Hebrew and Arabic the prt. was still used under certain circumstances (in Hebrew after *wa-*, in Arabic after *lam* 'not', *lammā* 'not (yet)' and *'in* 'if'), everywhere else it was replaced by the nom.

D. Nominal or Preterite Used to Express a Wish in West Semitic and Old Egyptian

To express a wish, the tenses are used as aspects: The wished state or act are represented as already accomplished, and therefore a nom. or prt. (which is then called juss.) are used.

5. THE TENSES IN AKKADIAN

With verba status the nom. is used in Akk. for the future too, which is an innovation, as W. Sem. and O.Eg. (so also Proto-Sem.) use an impf. in this case.

With verba actionis the nom. expressing a past action has been replaced by the prt., so that the nom. is only used to express a state resulting from a past action.

The opposition of the tenses used for the past in Akk. (nom. with verba status/prt. with verba actionis) has been extended, insofar that it exists also in the tenses expressing a wish: A wished state is in the nom.: *lū balṭāta* 'may you live', a wished action is in the prt. (juss.): *līmur* 'may he see'.

6. PRETERITE *yaqtul* AND JUSSIVE *yaqtul*

Whether in Proto-Semitic these tenses were different as to their stress or not, is left out of consideration here. The difference as to stress is only perceptible in certain languages with certain weak verb classes.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

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FIRST NORTH-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON SEMITIC LINGUISTICS

Santa Barbara, California
March 24-25, 1973

The first North-American Conference on Semitic Linguistics was organized by Robert Hetzron (University of California, Santa Barbara) with the cooperation of Giorgio Buccellati (University of California, Los Angeles) and Joseph L. Malone (Barnard College--Columbia University). The purpose of the Conference is to promote the interest of Semitists in the various modern currents of linguistics. The full list of the papers presented at the 1973 Conference is given below. Those papers which have been submitted and accepted for inclusion in *AAL*, like the present one, are being published within the framework of the journal.

A. Semitic and its Afroasiatic Cousins

1. Carleton T. Hodge (University of Indiana), *The Nominal Sentence in Semitic* (=*AAL*2/4).
2. G. Janssens (University of Ghent, Belgium), *The Semitic Verbal System* (=*AAL* 2/4).
3. J. B. Callender (UCLA), *Afroasiatic Cases and the Formation of Ancient Egyptian Verbal Constructions with Possessive Suffixes* (=*AAL* 2/6).
4. Russell G. Schuh (UCLA), *The Chadic Verbal System and its Afroasiatic Nature* (forthcoming in *AAL*).
5. Andrzcj Zaborski (University of Cracow, Poland), *The Semitic External Plural in an Afroasiatic Perspective* (forthcoming in *AAL*).

B. Ancient Semitic Languages

6. Giorgio Buccellati (UCLA), *On the Akkadian "Attributive" Genitive* (forthcoming in *AAL*).
7. Daniel Ronnie Cohen (Columbia University), *Subject and Object in Biblical Aramaic: A Functional Approach Based on Form-Content Analysis* (=*AAL*2/1).
8. Richard Steiner (Touro College, N.Y.), *Evidence from a Conditioned Sound Change for Lateral ḍ in Pre-Aramaic.*
9. Stanislav Segert (UCLA), *Verbal Categories of Some Northwest Semitic Languages: A Didactical Approach* (=*AAL*2/5).
10. Charles Krahmalkov (University of Michigan), *On the Noun with Heavy Suffixes in Punic.*

C. Hebrew

11. Joseph L. Malone (Barnard College--Columbia University), *Systematic vs. Autonomous Phonemics and the Hebrew Grapheme "dagesh"* (=*AAL*2/7).
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15. Talmy Givón (UCLA), *On the Role of Perceptual Clues in Hebrew Relativization* (=*AAL* 2/8).
16. Alan C. Harris (UCLA), *The Relativization "which that is" in Israeli Hebrew.*

D. Arabic

17. Ariel A. Bloch (University of California, Berkeley), *Direct and Indirect Relative Clauses in Arabic.*
18. Frederic J. Cadora (Ohio State University), *Some Features of the Development of Telescoped Words in Arabic Dialects and the Status of Koiné II.*

E. Ethiopian

19. Gene B. Gragg (University of Chicago), *Morpheme Structure Conditions and Underlying Form in Amharic* (forthcoming in *AAL*).
20. C. Douglas Johnson (University of California, Santa Barbara), *Phonological Channels in Chaha* (=*AAL* 2/2).
21. Robert Hetzron (University of California, Santa Barbara), *The t-Converb in Western Gurage and the Role of Analogy in Historical Morphology* (=*AAL*2/2).

F. Beyond Afroasiatic

22. Gilbert B. Davidowitz (New York), *Cognate Afroasiatic and Indoeuropean Affixes: Conjugational Person-Markers.*

SECOND NORTH—AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON SEMITIC LINGUISTICS

Santa Barbara, California
March 25-26, 1974

The second North-American Conference on Semitic Linguistics was held in Santa Barbara, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society, on March 25-26, 1974. It was organized by Gene Gragg (University of Chicago), with Robert Hetzron being in charge of local arrangements. The full list of the papers presented at the 1974 Conference is given below; those papers which have been submitted and accepted for inclusion in *AAL*, like the present one, are being published within the framework of the journal.

A. Hebrew

1. Richard Steincr (Touro College, N.Y.), *On the Origin of the* hedcr ∿ hᵃdar *Alternation in Hebrew*.
2. Talmy Givón (UCLA), *Verb Complements and Relative Clauses: A Diachronic Case Study in Biblical Hebrew* (=*AAL* 1/4).
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4. Alan Harris (UCLA), *The Number Two / Collapsing: Two Problems in a Synchronic Description of Modern Hebrew*.

B. Aramaic

5. Yona Sabar (UCLA), *The Impact of Israeli Hebrew on the Neo-Aramaic Dialect of the Jews of Zacho in Israel*.

C. General Semitic

6. Alan Corré (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), *The Suprasegmental Feature of Length in Semitic* (forthcoming in *AAL*).

D. Arabic

7. Aricl Bloch (University of California, Berkeley), *Pronoun Externalization in Arabic*.
8. Aharon Barnca (University of California, Berkeley), *Reference to Time, Space and Other Types of Quantification in the City Dialect of Gaza* (=*AAL* 2/3).
9. Robert Hctzron (University of California, Santa Barbara), *Origin of Case-Government in Arabic Numerals*.

E. Ethiopic

10. Gene Gragg (University of Chicago), *Remarks on the Development of the Broken Plural System in Northern Ethiopic Semitic*.

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